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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [MNUC](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AU](#)
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY

REF: (A) UNVIE VIENNA 531 (B) VIENNA 2366

Classified By: CDA J. Dean Yap. Reason: 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Austria will propose a multilateral system for managing the nuclear fuel cycle at next week's opening of the IAEA General Conference (GC); sees no need (and little realistic chance) for a third UNSCR on Iran's nuclear program and was uncomfortable with the EU Presidency's September 11 IAEA BoG statement on the issue; and, will continue to play a double game on nuclear energy - taking moderate/constructive stances in diplomatic fora while continuing low-key anti-nuclear energy activity in public. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Incoming Econ/Pol Counselor, accompanied by Pol unit chief, took advantage of an introductory call on MFA Department Director for Disarmament, Arms Control, and Non-Proliferation Alexander Marschik to discuss key aspects of Austria's nuclear diplomacy.

Fuel Cycle Initiative

¶3. (C) The most significant upcoming development will be FonMin Plassnik's proposal on Sept. 17, at the opening of the IAEA GC, for a system for controlling the nuclear fuel cycle through international management of fuel production. The proposal will be made public in the media over the weekend, according to Marschik, who acknowledged having little background on the source of the proposal. From his comments, it does not appear that Austria has done much background work and it is not clear whether the initiative will be vigorously pursued diplomatically or is oriented toward the domestic anti-nuclear constituency in Austria.

Iranian Nuclear Activities

¶4. (C) Marschik was bemused by the EU's Sept. 11 statement on Iran at the IAEA BoG meeting (Ref A); noting that it was refreshing to see the U.S. and EU-3 taking a softer stance than the EU. He said, though, he would not expect to see such a situation recur. He reiterated Austria's view (Ref B) that there was little reason to fear UNSC diplomacy being delayed by the Iran-IAEA work plan. On the one hand, he was rather confident that the plan could be completed in 2-3 months. Iran knew, he postulated, that delay would be used against it. On the other hand, he was skeptical about the value or prospects for a third UNSC sanctions resolution. At best, he thought, the Council would agree to a modest toughening of existing sanctions -- not enough to have a real impact on Iran, which he viewed as relatively impervious to sanctions.

Bipolar Nuclear Diplomacy

¶5. (C) Noting that Political Director Mayr-Harting had told

him Sept. 7 that Min. Plassnik had no intention of conducting a campaign against nuclear energy, Counselor noted the Embassy's surprise to learn that on Sept. 20 the Austrian Environment Ministry will host an event on the margins of the GC to present a study that concludes that nuclear energy is not compatible with sustainable development. Marschik reported that the Director's statement did not change Austrian policy on nuclear energy and that the country had a right, even an obligation, to present the facts as it understood them. He added, however, that the event had been scheduled for Thursday so as to distance it as much as possible from the Minister's intervention. Continuing, he also noted the need to balance a constructive stance in diplomatic fora -- which could lead to charges at home that Plassnik was soft on nuclear energy, with public diplomacy activities such as the IC event.

Yap